

# Doorstop with the Hon. Sussan Ley MP, Member for Farrer

## **THE HON. SUSSAN LEY MP – MEMBER FOR FARRER:**

Good morning everyone, and it is terrific to see some of the workforce out here at Overall Forge in Lavington.

Welcome to you Prime Minister. Thank you for coming to Albury. I think this is your third visit since I've been the local member. I'm delighted that you're here talking about our Inland Rail project, manufacturing in this terrific inland location and how we can deliver not just for the region but for the country.

Glen Nagle, the chief here at Overall Forge has been showing us around and giving us a bit of a brief on the manufacturing environment.

We are very proud in Albury to have this business here. We are very proud of what you do. You could easily be doing it somewhere else in Australia, indeed in the world, but you are right here in the region and that matters a great deal.

Thank you again, Prime Minister, over to you to make some remarks.

## **PRIME MINISTER:**

Thank you Sussan and thank you Glen for the great work you and all your team do here in Albury at Overall Forge.

It is a reminder yet again that Australians can do anything. Here you have advanced manufacturing. 40 per cent of what is produced here is exported. You are competing in the most competitive markets in the world. As Sussan said, you could be operating anywhere in Australia, indeed anywhere in the world, and it is a commitment, it is a sign of your commitment to Australian engineering, Australian skills, Australian enterprise that you are here and I want to thank you for that.

We are backing you. We are backing you in every way. As you know, we are providing, delivering business tax cuts which will provide real incentives for investment.

We know if you get more investment, you get more jobs. We want to see more investment in Australian manufacturing industry.

I was over in Tumut yesterday at Visy. They are making investments there. We are looking forward to more investment in regional manufacturing right across the nation because that delivers more jobs.

Equally, as we have just been discussing with Glen, the real pressure this business is under is from higher energy costs, in particular gas prices.

They've gone up massively over the last few years.

Now, we are addressing that and I can say, I'm pleased to say that wholesale gas prices are coming down.

What we saw was a comprehensive failure of policy where some years ago, federal Labor government and Queensland Labor government allowed gas to be exported from Queensland, paid no attention to the needs of the domestic industry or, indeed, families and households and so we actually saw a shortage of gas for the domestic market in the east coast of Australia which is incredible when you think about it, that Australia is about to become the largest exporter of LNG.

What we have had to do is take strong steps to put limits on exports. We have announced that earlier in the year. Already you have seen the market responding and the spot price has come down significantly from where it was at the beginning of the year.

We are determined to ensure that there will always be enough gas for the domestic market, whether it is industrial customers like Overall Forge or whether it is mums and dads at home wanting gas for cooking and heating and so forth.

This is a vitally important part of our policy.

And, of course, the price of gas feeds into the price of electricity. That again is the reason why we have seen very recently a big rise in electricity costs.

So what we are doing on gas will take the pressure off electricity prices but also we have stepped in to protect families, households, businesses by ensuring that the retailers, making sure they communicate with their customers and tell them when they've been on a plan that's coming to an end, what it's going to mean for them if they don't go on to another plan and they just get on to the standard offer, often resulting in households paying hundreds of dollars, in some cases over a thousand dollars more a year than they need too.

You have already seen, as a result of our intervention with the chief executives of the big electricity retailers, people are getting notifications and being told your plan has expired, you could be paying less, look at these alternatives.

We've got a government website to provide price comparisons. We are doing everything we can to ensure that Australians are not paying one cent more for their energy, whether it is electricity or gas, than they need to. That's our commitment.

Right across the board, we are backing opportunity, we are backing enterprise, we are backing investment because that means more jobs and more well-paid jobs.

That's our commitment in regional Australia and right across the nation.

Glen and all the team here at Overall Forge, thank you. I've been very impressed with what you are doing. It is very dramatic business all of that hot steel and I really congratulate you on your great efforts here in Albury. And Sussan, thank you for inviting me down to be with you today.

**JOURNALIST:**

Is the company asking anything specific of the government to help them along?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Well, not yet, but Glen may think of something.

**GLEN NAGLE – OVERALL FORGE:**

No, not yet.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Glen could say a few words. But you are pleased about what we are doing?

**GLEN NAGLE:**

Yes, very pleased about the outcome with gas. 12 months ago, 6 months ago it was very grim for us. We had massive price hikes in our gas contracts and put a lot of pressure on our business. So, hopefully with these outcomes things will start coming down and take a lot of pressure off us.

**JOURNALIST:**

When you say "lots of pressures", what does that mean? Reduced shifts?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

You were saying a lot more – just explain how much more you are having to pay for gas now than you were a few years ago?

**GLEN NAGLE:**

Since April, our gas bill has gone up nearly \$116,000 a month.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Think about that.

**GLEN NAGLE:**

That is nearly \$1.4 million a year and we are competing against an overseas market so we have lost business for it and we are running a lot less than we were 12 months ago.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Glen, some people have said that the action I'm taking to limit exports is

heavy-handed. Well, the reason we are taking that strong action is we're putting the jobs here at Overall Forge and at many other manufacturing businesses and industrial businesses around Australia first.

We're putting Australian families and Australian jobs first.

We're going to make sure that there is enough gas here in this market so that you're not paying more than you should for gas on a wholesale or industrial basis here on the east coast.

**JOURNALIST:**

And is the reduction in exports already started? Or when will it?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

It will begin from next year. The limitations will begin from next year but there is a process going through that's being undertaken at the moment by the government, but, of course, because the market can see it coming, people are building it into their price and their expectations.

Look, this is a great example of how the Labor Party bungles energy policy. I have often said their approach is a combination of ideology and politics, it is actually ideology and idiocy.

What were they thinking? What were they thinking allowing all of that gas to be exported without for one moment heeding the warnings about the need for gas in the domestic market?

They basically abandoned Australian jobs and Australian families and that is why I am having to take very strong steps.

You see it again with the Daniel Andrews in Victoria. He has announced massive new renewable targets in Victoria.

Lots of wind, lots of solar – that's terrific. Not a word about storage.

How is he going to back those up? What happens with the wind stops blowing and the sun stops shining?

The only government that is taking big steps, big bold steps to look after storage is my government with Snowy Hydro 2.0.

As you know, that will be the biggest pumped hydro storage in the Southern Hemisphere and they are at work at it now.

**JOURNALIST:**

Prime Minister, we've got businesses in north-east Victoria and here on the Border who have been talking about the cost of energy for around a year and they've already had to lay off jobs. So this is too late for people have lost their jobs and their saying this issue has fallen on deaf ears on both sides of government and that you've been sitting on this for too long.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Well, we are taking the strong action now that is needed. I've taken this action on gas prices and we are doing a lot of things on the energy front. We are also legislating to remove the right of the network companies to game the system and keep on jacking up the rate they can charge for their poles and wires – that's abolishing Limited Merits Reviews.

I have talked about how we have brought in the heads of the big retailers to make sure customers know what the right deal is for them, what the best deal is for them.

And as I said, we are taking very strong action on gas.

Now, they are all things that have an impact right in the here and now but longer term we're planning for the backup, for the storage that you need to back up renewables.

You know, before I spoke about the importance of storage in February of this year at the Press Club, I could not find any evidence that any previous federal government or state government making that a top priority.

So we have Snowy Hydro 2.0 underway and a number of other storage schemes.

We are working with the Tasmanians on Hydro Tasmania. Tasmania could also become a big renewable energy battery for Australia because it has a big hydro scheme as well.

We are working in the here and now making sure people aren't paying any more than they need to for electricity and energy today and we have got long-term plans as well.

So, it's a comprehensive approach that is based on engineering and economics.

You would agree with the engineering and economics?

**GLEN NAGLE:**

Yes – certainly.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

And your CFO would particularly agree with the economics.

**GLEN NAGLE:**

Yes.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

So that is our approach.

**JOURNALIST:**

But have you waited too long to do this? Are you worried that we have missed opportunities with overseas-

**PRIME MINISTER:**

We are getting on with the job now. We absolutely are. We have been focused on this for some time and we are taking action now, and action that our opponents neglected. Dealing with problems, frankly, that the Labor Party created.

And, indeed, if you look at what Andrews is doing in Victoria, just across the border here, he is creating more problems for everyone in the electricity market.

**JOURNALIST:**

You mentioned Andrews – I know that the federal government has put in money to the north-east line.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Yes that's right.

**JOURNALIST:**

But where's the rolling stock? What is your message to Daniel Andrews?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Well you know, we're playing our part. We're making a very substantial investment in the north-east line, that'll be a smoother and faster and more comfortable ride. We know there have been big problems with the rail bed there and we are making a substantial investment into that, but obviously the Victorian Government has got to play its part and make sure the rolling stock is up to scratch.

**JOURNALIST:**

Mr Turnbull, you've got Federal Members of Parliament in the High Court today with questions over their citizenship? [Inaudible]

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Well look, I haven't heard the latest on the High Court, but I am sure they'll hear the matter promptly.

There will be, I think, seven matters before the Court dealing with these citizenship-by-descent cases and I am sure the court will clarify how Section 44 operates.

But I have to say again that we are very, very confident that our members who have been caught up in this will be held by the Court to be eligible to sit in the Parliament and therefore eligible to be ministers.

**JOURNALIST:**

Do you think Bill Shorten should front up his papers? Why do you think he hasn't shown them yet?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Well, transparency is not Bill's long suit, let's be frank.

I mean, it's up to him whether he wants to be transparent and disclose the basis on which he says he renounced his citizenship. I think he is creating a big issue by failing to do so.

But you know what, I tell you what is equally indicative of his character, is in the last sitting of Parliament, we succeeded in changing the law to prevent businesses from paying secret, making secret corrupt payments to unions. So in other words, when business pays money to unions, it's got to be transparent, it's got to be public and it's got to be for a legitimate purpose.

You would think that that had always been the law. Truthfully, if you said to most people: 'Do you think that has always been the law?', they would say: 'Of course it is, it makes sense'. Well it wasn't.

As the Hayden Royal Commission revealed, hundreds of thousands of dollars of payments were made to the AWU while Shorten was Secretary, for no apparent reason and at the same time, they were negotiating agreements with business and trading away workers' rights.

So what we've done is introduced a law that speaks for transparency and integrity. Shorten opposed it. And you've got to ask him – if he's prepared to cover that up – I guess he'd cover up anything.

**JOURNALIST:**

Today is the last day to check your enrolment-

**PRIME MINISTER:**

It is. Now this is very important, it is very important.

As I was saying on Border FM this morning – this is the last day to get your enrolment up to date and enrolled if you're not enrolled, to vote in the postal plebiscite on same-sex marriage.

I want to encourage everyone, if they are not enrolled and can be enrolled, to do so.

If you think your enrolment details, your address might be out of date, it's very easy to get online and bring it up to date.

I think when I last checked well over 500,000 people had done so, so that's great.

I encourage everyone to do that.

Lucy and I will be voting 'yes' in the postal vote.

**JOURNALIST:**

Mr Turnbull, the High Court faces two, the same-sex marriage bill faces two High Court challenges – do you think it will still go ahead?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Yes, our advice is that the postal vote is fully constitutional, although it has been challenged by the Labor Party.

The Labor Party don't want Australians to have their say on this issue. We do.

We made a commitment at the election to give everyone their say.

Labor blocked a compulsory attendance vote, a plebiscite, in the Senate so we're offering this postal vote and Labor is trying to block it in the High Court.

I don't know why they're so opposed to Australians having their say, most Australians do want to have their say.

**JOURNALIST:**

Labor's big issue is that it is \$122 million to have this postal plebiscite.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Yeah well democracy costs money. It costs money to have Parliament too and have elections.

**JOURNALIST:**

Wouldn't it be easier to put it to the Parliament?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Well, we made a commitment at the election to give everyone their say and we're honouring that commitment.

Now with great respect, the journalistic community are often very critical of governments for not delivering on their commitments. No-one's suggested we have broken any promises since the election. We made a number of commitments at the election, we're honouring them. With this one, we're doing our very best to deliver on it having been frustrated in the Senate.

**JOURNALIST:**

In light of the citizenship issue, have you had to seek recent assurances from crossbenchers like Cathy McGowan, the Member for Indi about ongoing



support if things don't go your way?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Cathy and I have a very good relationship, we talk a lot.

She's indicated publicly that she continues to support the Government on confidence and supply.

She's said that she believes that Barnaby is entitled to sit in the House and vote in the House, pending the High Court decision.

She has suggested her view is that he should step down as a minister. I obviously respect her opinion, but my judgement is that he should stay as a minister because if you're entitled to sit in the Parliament and vote in the Parliament, then you're entitled to be a Minister.

We are in frequent touch and often talking about the great work the government is doing in the electorate of Indi, just across the border here as I am with Sussan talking about what we are doing on this side of the border and particularly in telecommunications.

**JOURNALIST:**

Prime Minister, on rivers and water, the MDBA has admitted that flood mitigation isn't its number one priority and there are communities from all [inaudible] that are concerned that they might get flooded again this year – what can be done and should this be made a priority to protect these people in these communities?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Sussan knows a lot about this as well. Sussan you may not have heard the question, just asking about flood mitigation. Well, the MDBA has got to manage a whole lot of socioeconomic factors and water-management factors as they develop, as they run the river.

Obviously mitigating floods is one of them as they transport the water down the river.

As you know, it is a long and pretty flat system. The drop in elevation from the dam here at Albury at the Hume Dam all the way down to the river mouth is I think about 175 meters, so over 2,500 kilometers of river length – it's flat system.

**THE HON. SUSSAN LEY MP:**

You're aware, that we are, Cathy McGowan and I are working with the Basin senior officials, at a very technical level, just to change the operating rules a little bit in Hume Dam and we're very confident we will be able to achieve less risk of flooding even though we can never prevent floods.

**JOURNALIST:**

Well that's about air space and I know speaking to the MDBA that they were saying they can be flexible on that but they can't guarantee that these communities who have lost tens of millions of dollars when they were flooded, that it won't happen again.

**THE HON. SUSSAN LEY MP:**

Well, we're working on it and we've talked about it.

**JOURNALIST:**

When can we see Sussan back in cabinet?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Sussan Ley is an outstanding Parliamentarian. She has done great work as a minister and she has got a long and very distinguished career ahead of her in the future. I look forward to working with Sussan for many, many years to come.

**JOURNALIST:**

Have you got anything to say on the passing of Fiona Richardson?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Thank you. That is a very, very tragic. It is a tragedy for such a young woman with such a great career in politics and obviously many years ahead of her to be taken away so suddenly and so cruelly from her family.

Our condolences go out to her family. Our heartfelt condolences go out to her family on this very, very tragic and untimely death.

Thank you.

**JOURNALIST:**

I suppose, how important is it to have the Inland Rail in regional areas?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Well, Sussan, do you want to talk about Inland Rail?

**THE HON. SUSSAN LEY MP:**

Well, the Inland Rail that's coming to Albury is primarily freight. So we are absolutely delighted that not only will we have a Melbourne-Brisbane freight line but we will have the necessary linkages from the food-bowls of the Riverina and north-east Victoria linking with that rail line. So it's very exciting and with that we must go and have a look at the Ettamogah Rail Hub.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

I'll just make one point though just following on from what Sussan has said –

the Inland Rail has been talked about for over 100 years – you’re asking me about getting on to issues sooner or later – Inland Rail has been talked about for 100 years, even longer than the Western Sydney Airport I might add, but they’re both examples of infrastructure that my government is getting on to build.

Snowy Hydro 2.0, the plans for that were drawn up in the 1980s. Talked about, a lot of people talked about it, my government is getting on and building it.

So we’re building, we’re doing, we’re getting on with the job. Whether it is Inland Rail, Snowy Hydro 2.0 or whether it is the Western Sydney Airport, they’re all examples of infrastructure that has been recognised as being needed to be done for a very long time and we’re getting on and building it.

Thanks very much.

[ENDS]

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## [Radio interview with Luisa Pelizzari and Matt Griffith, Triple M The Border 105.7](#)

**MATT:**

Welcome the Prime Minister, the Honourable Malcolm Turnbull MP who joins us right now – Malcolm Turnbull, good morning.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Good morning. It’s great to be with you. What a welcome.

**LU:**

Haven’t we turned on a beautiful day for you here on the Border, Prime Minister? It is magnificent.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Well, I’m not there yet but I’m looking forward to it. I’m sure it will be a beautiful day. It is always a beautiful day on the Border.

**LU:**

Look, very true and we’ve had some pretty average weather but it will be very nice for you to get around but I suppose what we need to know is why are you here on the Border today?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

I'm coming down to talk about energy prices and talk about inland rail. I'll be visiting an engineering business in Albury and talking about the way in which we are working hard to bring down the cost of gas.

In fact, we've already brought down the cost of gas on the east coast by some very strong measures.

**MATT:**

Yes.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

It's a big issue. I mean Albury, Albury-Wodonga, it's got a great manufacturing and engineering tradition and energy is a vital input there. And gas prices have been too high. They've gone up because of a failure in policy. I mean, a lot of your listeners will be puzzled – you know, how on earth can we have expensive gas in Australia given we produce so much?

**MATT:**

Yes.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Well, what happened was some years ago, and I regret to say it was under the last Labor government, both federally and in Queensland, they agreed, they set up these big export facilities that were designed to be fed by coal seam gas. They didn't produce enough gas and what they also failed to do was to ring-fence enough gas for the domestic market.

So what happened was that a lot of the domestic gas that had been going to businesses and families and households in eastern Australia was being exported. Prices went through the roof.

So I've intervened in a very, some people would say, a heavy handed way but there was not alternative. I've intervened to protect Australian jobs. So we have seen gas prices, the wholesale prices come down since the beginning of the year but we're basically limiting exports to ensure there is enough gas for whether you're an engineering business in Albury or a family in Wodonga, you've got to have enough gas.

**MATT:**

Yep, yep, they need it.

**LU:**

Well we do need and it's been a particularly cold winter this winter too so there will be a lot of people very happy to hear that with gas heating. Now one of the other things that we hear is on the discussion table is drug

testing for welfare recipients?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Yep. That's right. We're doing a trial. It's in three locations. We've announced two of them – one in Canterbury, Bankstown in Sydney and one in Logan in Queensland. There will be a third one announced shortly. We will test about, over the next two years, 5,000 people who are identified as high risk by Centrelink and they will, and if they're found to be using drugs then their welfare payments will be quarantined.

**MATT:**

Yes.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

They won't get any less money but they'll have 80 per cent of it put on a basics card so they won't get it in cash.

**MATT:**

See I think that's fine.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

They'll have to spend it on necessities.

**LU:**

Sounds like a good idea.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

It's a trial. I know there have been some critics. The Labor Party are very opposed to it. I'm not sure why. Surely, we don't want welfare dollars being used to buy drugs.

**MATT:**

True.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

And equally if people who are on welfare are on drugs they are not likely to get a job and the whole objective of programs like Newstart is to get people into employment.

**LU:**

Yes, yes. Alright, now, before we move on to another big issue, can we have a change of pace?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Yes.

**MATT:**

I would like to throw you, the Prime Minister of our great nation onto the 60-second griller if I could Malcolm Turnbull? Are you willing to take it on?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

I was going to say are you going to throw another PM on the barbie, as opposed to another shrimp?

**MATT:**

Yes! Exactly right. So the idea here is quick-fire answers and you can get yourself into a little bit of trouble here but I'm sure you can cope Malcolm Turnbull. Here we go.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

I'll do my best.

**MATT:**

You're on the griller, let's go, time starts now. Who in the Liberal Party would you least like to play a board game with?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Very good. I would think the Leader of the House, Christopher Pyne – he's a great tactician.

(Laughter)

**MATT:**

Oh definitely.

**LU:**

Yes.

**MATT:**

Do you prefer thrillers or romantic comedies?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Thrillers.

**MATT:**

Have you checked your birth certificate?

(Laughter)

**PRIME MINISTER:**

No, I haven't.

**MATT:**

Oh no!

**LU:**

Stop the clock!

**PRIME MINISTER:**

I have no doubt. You know, actually, it's on the other side of the mountains but I was in Tumut yesterday and I disclosed that I was citizen by descent of Tumut because my father was born there.

**MATT:**

Oh okay, alright – that's fair enough.

**LU:**

Fair enough, that's pretty Aussie.

**MATT:**

Alright, restart the clock with 30 seconds to go. Who is better, John Farnham or Jimmy Barnes?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Jimmy Barnes.

**MATT:**

Oh, yes. I love you.

(Laughter)

Have you ever played a sport?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Played at sport?

**LU:**

Yeah, played a sport.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Played a sport! Oh yeah, many sports. Yes. All in a very mediocre way.

**MATT:**

Oh terrific. Have you ever been ten pin bowling?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Yes, I have, yep.

**MATT:**

Would you rather have dinner with Pauline Hanson, Derryn Hinch or Donald Trump?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Well I think, look, out of the three of them, you know what I'd rather do?

**MATT:**

Yes?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

I'd rather have dinner with them all. I think it would be very entertaining.

**LU:**

All together? That would be very entertaining.

**MATT:**

A round of applause! You have successfully navigated your way through the 60 second griller. Well done Prime Minister.

**LU:**

Very well done. Now before you go Prime Minister, it would be remiss of us not to mention that today or tonight by midnight is the last opportunity to ensure that we are enrolled to vote on the Australian Electoral Roll for the marriage equality postal vote.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Yes that's right. So go to the AEC website – [aec.gov.au](http://aec.gov.au) – and either enroll, make sure you've enrolled or check your details because your enrollment details might be out of date.

**LU:**

Yeah, your address and all that sort of stuff. It takes like five minutes I did it the other day. And just quickly, now you've been very clear about your personal belief that we should have marriage equality in Australia?

**PRIME MINISTER:**



Yes. Yes, I'll be voting 'yes' as will Lucy.

**LU:**

Yes and you've said that on numerous occasions but how do you feel about the fact that you have to put your own beliefs aside to keep your political party happy?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

I haven't put my own – I'm not sure why you'd ask that question because my belief is that we should, same-sex marriage should be legalised. I'll be voting 'yes' in the postal vote and when the postal vote is carried – well I believe it will be – but if it is carried then we will facilitate a Private Members Bill to come into the Parliament to legalise same sex marriage and it will sail through the Parliament.

**LU:**

And timeframe for that kind of thing if it all goes according to plan?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

We should be able to get it done by the end of the year.

**LU:**

Excellent.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Assuming the postal vote is held on the timetable, you know there's been a High Court action – the Labor Party and others have brought an action to frustrate, to stop Australians having their say.

**MATT:**

Yes.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

They don't want you to have your say on this issue.

We do.

But assuming we're successful in the High Court – and we're confident we will be – then we'll know the results before the end of the year, we'll know them in November. That would give us enough time to legislate before the end of the year, which would be the goal.

**LU:**

Fantastic.

**MATT:**

Right, there we go.

Prime Minister, thank you so much for talking to us, you're heading to our part of the world a little bit later on today.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

I'll be there this morning.

**MATT:**

I'm sure we'll make you feel very welcome. Prime Minister, Malcolm Turnbull thank you so much for your time.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Thanks so much, great to talk to you.

[ENDS]

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## [Radio interview with Dave Hughes and Kate Langbroek, KIISFM 106.5](#)

**DAVE HUGHES:**

We've got the Prime Minister on with us, Kate, Good afternoon Mr Turnbull.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Hey, how are you? Great to be with you.

**KATE LANGBROEK:**

That introduction you did just made it sound like you're a sketch character but you're not – you genuinely are the Prime Minister.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

The very one.

**KATE LANGBROEK:**

Yes.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

It's good to be with you and all of your listeners too.

**DAVE HUGHES:**

You must be annoyed that there is a sketch character out there who is doing a lot of your work? Is that annoying Malcolm?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

No, it's very flattering, it's very flattering.

(Laughter)

**KATE LANGBROEK:**

Well you are very impersonatable and particularly when you talk about Lucy.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

When I talk about Lucy? Well, I love Lucy.

(Laughter)

**KATE LANGBROEK:**

You do love Lucy! And it is very attractive – a man who loves his wife.

**DAVE HUGHES:**

I'm worried now. I'm worried that it's not really the Prime Minister. Is it definitely the Prime Minister?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

It definitely is but you know, look, it is great to be on your show and it is good to have the opportunity.

**DAVE HUGHES:**

What is our show called, Mr Prime Minister?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Well, it's *Hughesy and Kate* isn't it?

(Laughter)

**KATE LANGBROEK:**

Did you just have an aide next to you who-

**PRIME MINISTER:**

No, no – I pick these things up. The only thing I don't want to talk about is this vampire facial stuff.

**DAVE HUGHES:**

Oh god, he's done his research.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

That sounds more gory than *Game of Thrones*.

**KATE LANGBROEK:**

More gory than a session in Parliament? Which is a blood sport.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Well, it is definitely more gory than that. And more shocking than a frozen dragon being dragged out of a frozen lake and brought back to life by the Night King.

**KATE LANGBROEK:**

Are you a *Game of Thrones* fan?

**DAVE HUGHES:**

Yeah, that's the last episode.

**KATE LANGBROEK:**

A bit of GOT!

**DAVE HUGHES:**

How do you find time? You actually – now be honest Malcolm – do you find time to watch that show or are you just being given information about the show?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

No, no – actually, I like *Game of Thrones* – I do. I mean it is very confronting at times.

**KATE LANGBROEK:**

It's confronting!

(Laughter)

**PRIME MINISTER:**

It is! Look, you know, when you think about it –

**DAVE HUGHES:**

Do you fast-forward through the nude scenes?

(Laughter)

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Well, you know at my age I can handle them alright.

**DAVE HUGHES:**

Oh, you've still got it Malcolm!

**KATE LANGBROEK:**

What does Lucy do? Do you watch it together?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Lucy is not a great fan of *Game of Thrones* to be honest.

**KATE LANGBROEK:**

Right.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

But she dips in and out of it but she's not as – my absolutely favourite book that I read again and again, literally, probably, more than a dozen times I would think when I was a kid was *Lord of the Rings*. And so, I have always loved the sword and sorcerer type genre.

**KATE LANGBROEK:**

Right, yes.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

And of course *Lord of the Rings* was basically where it all started. All of this stuff has spun off from that.

**DAVE HUGHES:**

But Malcolm, can I ask, if you're watching *Game of Thrones* alone and then as a really racy scene comes on and then Lucy walks in – is it a bit weird or not?

(Laughter)

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Now, maybe we should get onto vampire facials.

(Laughter)

**KATE LANGBROEK:**

Alright, now you wanted –

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Or you'll trick me. You'll ask me whether I'm 'Netflix and chilling'.

(Laughter)

**KATE LANGBROEK:**

Alright – we know you can't be tricked.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Yeah, I dunno. I am sure you're very tricky.

**DAVE HUGHES:**

Is it really him?

**KATE LANGBROEK:**

It is him! Now, Mr Turnbull-

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Yes?

**KATE LANGBROEK:**

Now today you've been, this is very interesting because this is like a big policy thing – drug testing for-

**PRIME MINISTER:**

It is. This is about the drug testing. It is a very big deal.

**KATE LANGBROEK:**

People who receive the dole.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Yep.

**DAVE HUGHES:**

5,000 are going to be tested?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Well it is a trial. Look, I know there have been some people who have said how do you know it will work? Well, if we knew it would work we'd do it nationally and we wouldn't be doing a trial. I mean, people always want governments to be innovative, to try new things.

**KATE LANGBROEK:**

Yes, true. And people are sick of 'crackheads'.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Well, look, people don't want people on welfare to be spending their welfare dollars on drugs.

**KATE LANGBROEK:**

However-

**PRIME MINISTER:**

And equally – just let me make this point – if you love somebody and you care for them, you don't want them doing drugs and you certainly don't want people on welfare doing drugs because if, this is people on Newstart and so forth, because that's going to stop them getting a job, right?

**DAVE HUGHES:**

That's true.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

So the whole objective is to get them off welfare and into a job and so if they're doing drugs, then you want to stop them doing it. So I think this is a very, look, this is a trial – it'll be 5,000 people that will go through this trial, we'll see how it works. If it successful, we hope it is, then we could do more of it.

And, you know, if you can get people off drugs and into a job, it's a great thing.

**KATE LANGBROEK:**

Marijuana seems a bit unfair. I understand ice, ecstasy-

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Well, it's a bit illegal however. You may say it's a bit unfair but it's also quite a bit illegal.

**DAVE HUGHES:**

Yeah, but I mean, well its not very illegal.

**KATE LANGBROEK:**

It's not very illegal. Its slightly illegal. And do you know what? Really, probably, there's only two more years illegality in it.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Well, look, I wouldn't agree with you on that but – it has very addictive qualities-

**KATE LANGBROEK:**

Of course, of course.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

And it obviously is a major issue, perhaps not with the prominence that ice has nowadays.

**KATE LANGBROEK:**

Can I just ask you this?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Yep.

**KATE LANGBROEK:**

For instance, if you test positive to ice – what happens then?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

What will happen then is you will go onto a – you will get your welfare payment, 80 per cent of it will be put onto what is called a basics card which means it can only be spent on necessities. So, you know – food, rent, clothing that sort of thing but it can't be spent-

**KATE LANGBROEK:**

Right.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

You're not getting it in cash, in other words.

**DAVE HUGHES:**

And Malcolm would you be happy – I think that's reasonable.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

So basically, the aim is to reduce the amount of cash.

**KATE LANGBROEK:**

Yes.

**DAVE HUGHES:**

Yes

**PRIME MINISTER:**

And quite a few people volunteer to go onto these income management schemes,



or this basics card. It is very useful for some people who have difficulty managing their income in these, that are clients of the Centrelink.

**DAVE HUGHES:**

Yeah.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

But frankly this is a very important trial dealing with a very important, very significant social problem.

**DAVE HUGHES:**

Fair enough, yep.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

And we want people to get off drugs and into jobs. That's the goal.

**DAVE HUGHES:**

Malcolm, would you be happy for MP's to be drug tested?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

I know people have often asked that. It wouldn't trouble me, but I don't think there's a lot of demand for it.

**KATE LANGBROEK:**

How do you know?

**DAVE HUGHES:**

Yeah, I mean, I imagine if you're being drug tested when you're on Centrelink and you-

**KATE LANGBROEK:**

Yeah and you're a recipient of public money.

**DAVE HUGHES:**

You'd go: 'Well why can't MP's be drug tested?'

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Well again, it isn't-

**KATE LANGBROEK:**

Who would you start with Malcolm?

(Laughter)

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Alright well you are, you're inviting me to make some nominations. Look, I don't think that's – that's never been regarded as an issue in Parliament-

**KATE LANGBROEK:**

No, not by the people who pass the laws.

**DAVE HUGHES:**

And before we let you go, and you've got to go I know – can we just say – you want everyone to vote, well you want everyone to vote 'yes' in the marriage postal vote don't you?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Yeah, well Lucy and I are voting 'yes'. And we absolutely are voting 'yes' and I encourage others to do so. But above all I encourage everyone to vote.

**DAVE HUGHES:**

Yep.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

And, look, again I respect the views of those who differ from us, who want to vote 'no' – I respect their views, I'm sure they respect mine. But the good thing is we're giving everybody a say. But Lucy and I will be voting 'yes'.

**DAVE HUGHES:**

And if it gets over 50 per cent it will become the law of the land?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

In my view yes, it will sail through the Parliament. We will facilitate a Private Members Bill, but there are quite a few people in the Parliament who will vote 'no' in the postal vote but who have said that if the people say yes they will nonetheless vote 'yes' for the Bill.

**DAVE HUGHES:**

That's good.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

If the postal vote is carried it will sail through the Parliament. There's nothing more certain than that.

**DAVE HUGHES:**

Great. Fantastic.

**KATE LANGBROEK:**

Mr Turnbull, I have enjoyed speaking to you so much more than I thought I was going to.

**DAVE HUGHES:**

Yes, Malcolm – a breath of fresh air!

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Well, thank you Kate – that's great.

**KATE LANGBROEK:**

I want to talk to you about a lot of other things but we can't.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

I'm very touched, that's very kind of you.

**DAVE HUGHES:**

He's loosened up. I think you've loosened up.

**KATE LANGBROEK:**

Well no he's direct, its good.

**DAVE HUGHES:**

He's loosened up, alright.

**KATE LANGBROEK:**

Thanks Mr Turnbull. I'd like to talk to him again at some point, thank you say hi to Lucy.

[ENDS]

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## [Remarks at the Opening of Visy Tumut Upgrade](#)

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Well thank you very much Anthony, it is a great day, a beautiful day in every respect. It is wonderful to be here with your mum Jeanne, with your sister Fiona, your wife Claudine.

This is a great family business. Most family businesses are small businesses, but all of them have the potential to be great global businesses with the leadership and the passion that the Pratt family have developed and delivered here and right around the nation, and indeed as we know in the United States.

Here in Tumut, where my father was born I might say, in 1926, so as I was saying earlier to the press there's been a lot of discussion about people having citizenship by descent so on that basis I'm a citizen of Tumut by descent – I hope you won't disown me. It is great to be here.

Look, this shows what investment does. You know everything my government does is designed to encourage Australian businesses to invest.

Why is that? Because it delivers jobs.

As Anthony said: 'The best social program is a job'.

John Howard used to say: 'The best form of welfare is a job'.

Everything we're doing is trying to encourage more investment and more jobs. And while we would like to see even more, and we'd like to see wages higher – of course we would – nonetheless over the last year we've seen 240,00 new jobs created in Australia.

Now given the global circumstances, that is a good effort but it demonstrates what we can do with confidence. Businesses need confidence and they need the incentives and the opportunities to invest.

So right across the board everything we're doing is focused on encouraging investment of the kind Anthony is making.

This business here, as Jean-Yves was saying on your excellent tour – Jean-Yves of course, he is a citizen by marriage, he fell in love with the girl from Maroo was it? There she is, good, very good. That was a great acquisition from France. Well done. A Franco-Australian alliance. Let's give them a round of applause.

[Applause]

But you see, what you've got here is a demonstration of what you can do with the right technology, the right leadership, the right vision, the right investment. And we're providing the incentives.

This is a business that exports 70 per cent of its production, as Jean-Yves was saying. Visy is the largest exporter of shipping containers in Australia. So this is an export business. And as Anthony foreshadowed earlier, at a time when a lot of people say manufacturing in Australia is not competitive – well what the Pratt family are demonstrating is with the right technology, you can be globally competitive right here in Australia, and they are.

Now you need markets, so since the Coalition came into power in 2013, we have opened up one big new export market after another.

China of course the biggest. We have the highest quality free trade deal with China of any developed country. Japan. Korea.

And of course we've enhanced our free trade agreement with Singapore. We're working, you would've seen at the G20, I was with President Widodo of Indonesia.

Indonesia is expected to be within 15, 20 years the fourth, maybe fifth, maybe fourth biggest economy in the world. We've both committed to delivering a free trade – a new free trade agreement, economic partnership agreement by the end of the year. That's very, very, really a very strong commitment from the Indonesian President.

And that's just the beginning. Right around the Pacific, right around the world – including our efforts to our free trade agreement with the Europeans, we've got commitments to that when we were in Hamburg and of course we'll have a free trade agreement with the UK when they're free to enter into one. We want to open as many doors for Australian exporters, whether it is of white top paper or services or whatever that we can because we believe Australians can do anything, and they will do anything given the opportunities.

So then right here in terms of tax, we are bringing company tax down.

Why are we doing that? Our opponents say that is a giveaway. They say we are giving things away – to handout.

Well, I don't actually think it's a handout to a business to reduce their tax. The reality is if people who believe that presumably believe all of the businesses profits belong to the government and whatever is left for them after tax is a handout. That's not the approach we take.

We know – as Paul Keating knew, and frankly as Bill Shorten knew when he was in his previous incarnation that he subsequently seems to have forgotten – we know that if you reduce the tax on business, you get more investment. You get more investment, you get more jobs.

So we've already succeeded in getting through the Senate reductions in company tax for businesses up to \$50 million turnover – there's more to go, there's further to go – but that benefits every Australian.

Half of Australians work for businesses with turnovers of \$50 million or less and so all of those companies, all of those employees are working for businesses that can now invest more, grow more, employ more, be able to pay higher wages, more and better jobs.

So that's our commitment.

Anthony we are so proud, all of us here, of what your family has achieved. It is a remarkable Australian success story.

In an industry which many people are pessimistic about – manufacturing – you've demonstrated that Australians can do anything and be world leaders and

you are.

So congratulations, I know I speak for everybody here that we are so proud of what you've achieved. We congratulate you, we salute you for the commitment you've made here and that you're making to Australian manufacturing and Australian jobs.

What a pledge – \$2 billion over ten years, 5,000 jobs. I tell you that's a big commitment. That really moves the needle. That will change lives, thousands of them for the better.

Thank you Anthony and Jeanne and all of your family here – you are great Australians, making a great commitment to our great nation.

Thank you.

[ENDS]

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## Doorstop with Anthony Pratt

**ANTHONY PRATT:**

I'd like to welcome the Prime Minister, it's a great honour to have him at our Tumut Paper Mill. Today I'd like to announce a plan to invest \$2 billion to create 5,000 high-paying manufacturing jobs for Australians over the next ten years.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

That is a fantastic pledge.

**ANTHONY PRATT:**

Thank you, Prime Minister.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

That is such a great commitment. You know, Anthony's plant here, exports half a billion dollars of its value. So 70% of the production is exported.

**ANTHONY PRATT:**

Yes.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

And you're making an additional investment right now of \$100 million into this plant?

**ANTHONY PRATT:**

Exactly.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

That's going to add to your capacity substantially.

**ANTHONY PRATT:**

Absolutely. We have tremendous faith, supporting your leadership sir, and we are doing it because we believe in Australia and we believe that the best social program is a job.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Well, that's absolutely right. There is no question about that. These are high-paying jobs. There is no plant in the world more advanced than this, is there?

**ANTHONY PRATT:**

No. This was the first major paper mill of this kind built in the world since 1980. We look forward to continuing to invest, as I said, \$2 billion in Australia to create 5,000 high-paying manufacturing jobs for Australians over the next 10 years.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Well Anthony, the commitment of you and your family to manufacturing in Australia, proving that Australians can do anything, that with the right technology, the right materials – and we have all of those and great committed workers, we have met some of those during the course of the tour – you can see that, with Anthony's leadership, you can achieve the world's best manufacturing facility, here in Tumut.

So congratulations.

**ANTHONY PRATT:**

Thank you so much Prime Minister.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

It is fantastic. Fantastic for this part of Australia. Fantastic for this region, but fantastic for the whole nation. Imagine, Anthony's business Visy is the largest exporter of 40 foot shipping containers carrying some of those rolls of paper, white-top paper that we saw being made in the plant a moment ago. So well done and your commitment to investment and jobs is so commendable.

It's the point that we make all the time; that if you want to grow the economy, you've got to have investment. Without investment, you don't get jobs. So every part of our program, every part of our platform – whether it

is reducing business taxes, whether it's providing incentives for export, whether it is opening up the big markets that Anthony and others export to, China, Korea, Japan, these massive free trade deals and others we are working on – enable the workers here to produce the goods that are then shipped out, creating jobs here, creating more opportunities for Australians.

The other thing Anthony, just talk a little bit about the way you support local businesses here. I don't know whether you noticed, but some of the networking people there, the people working on the electronics here, are Tumut firms.

**ANTHONY PRATT:**

Absolutely. The multiplier effect of this \$2 billion to create 5,000 high-paying manufacturing jobs directly is that it will create an additional 13,000 jobs, indirect jobs in Australia in addition to about 14,000 construction jobs in addition to that. So by the end of the 10 years, Visy will have invested \$8 billion of investment in Australia and created 30,000 high-paying, 30,000 jobs.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

As your manager Jean-Yves was saying as we went through, half of all the energy here is generated from the renewable resources, the lignin you extract from the woodchips?

**ANTHONY PRATT:**

Absolutely. In fact the \$2 billion we are going to invest, the pledge today, will be spent on clean energy, recycling infrastructure and other packaging.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Well it's fantastic, a great credit. Innovation, technology, investment, we're focused on all of those. Now, I don't want to be unduly political here, standing here at this plant but it is a very important point that every part of our program, everything we do, is designed to encourage Australian businesses like Anthony's to invest. Whether it's reducing business tax, whether it's opening up new opportunities, whether it's providing the infrastructure that they need, the sinews of the 21st century economy, to get ahead.

Our opponents have nothing like that. They have policies that appear to be simply focused on pulling down the successful; raising taxes, throwing impediments in the way of investment.

More investment means more jobs. All of that, as Anthony notes, that has a multiplier effect. So the 5,000 jobs he's adding, he will add over the next decade, will deliver many more jobs, many thousands more jobs, as that multiplies into the wider economy.

So it's great to be here with Anthony Pratt and all the team from Visy – congratulations – and we'd be delighted to take some questions.



**JOURNALIST:**

Anthony, while you're in the area, I wonder would having a Clean Energy Target in place make big investment decisions easier for yourself and for the company? And the PM is here today, have you spoken to him about a Clean Energy Target? What sort of response are you getting from the Feds?

**ANTHONY PRATT:**

Well look, we focus on what we can do ourselves. I think the Prime Minister is doing a fantastic job on energy and we are basically up, we've built five clean energy plants around the world, three of them are in Australia. We now generate 30% of our own energy ourselves.

There's three types of clean energy; there's wind, solar and biomass. We're in the biomass side of it and we are going to continue to invest in clean energy over the years as the technology evolves.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

A good point. Anthony, your business is a big consumer of gas too?

**ANTHONY PRATT:**

Yes.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Now gas is a vital component, energy component, both in the electricity generation business and of course, in manufacturing. Of course in many parts of the manufacturing sector, it's the feed stock. So gas is critically important.

Now we have seen in recent times, a huge increase in the price of gas. Now why is that? Good question. What happened? Well, I'll tell you what happened? You had a federal Labor Government, the previous one, you had a Queensland Labor Government that licensed the export of gas from Queensland without taking into account the impact that that might have on the domestic market. So we got into the extraordinary situation where the domestic market – customers like Anthony and of course mums and dads at home – were facing big increases in gas prices, because we were short of supply. Can you believe it? We are about to become the largest exporter of LNG and we are short of gas at home.

So what we have done is taken the strong measures. You wouldn't predict a Liberal Prime Minister would do this, but I put Australian jobs first and we have put controls on exports of gas and you've already seen the price of gas coming down in the east coast. We will make sure that we control exports. It is heavy-handed, I concede that and we don't do it with any great pleasure. But we will control exports so that the Australian market has full supply.

That's a good example of the practical action we're taking to protect jobs here and ensure that energy is affordable.

**JOURNALIST:**

Of the 5,000, how many more jobs will come to the Tumut plant?

**ANTHONY PRATT:**

I believe the total effect will be over time, probably 600 or 700.

**JOURNALIST:**

You've had an expansion here, a \$100 million expansion. The New South Wales Environment Protection Authority in the approval said they were concerned there was no long-term strategy for waste management at this site. Do you share that concern?

**ANTHONY PRATT:**

We are always trying to improve. We're very proud of the fact we recycle, it's got the highest recycled water rate in the world of any paper mill. And we're always trying to use more waste paper as well, that ironically helps clean up Sydney as well.

**JOURNALIST:**

[Inaudible] could we see any waste facilities in Tumut as part of the upgrade?

**ANTHONY PRATT:**

Possibly.

**JOURNALIST:**

Mr Pratt do you actually credit the Federal Government with helping you with today's announcement and how do you actually think the Federal Government has helped you run this business better?

**ANTHONY PRATT:**

I think it is a great tribute to the Government that unemployment – I believe – is at the lowest level it has been since 2013. So I think, in creating an overall environment where that's happened. I think that Australia, apart from New Zealand, we're the only Western country in Asia, so the huge amount of exports this mill does, which is the biggest amount of shipping containers exported in Australia is from this mill, Asia presents a tremendous export opportunity and a business opportunity for all of Australian business, whether it is food exports or paper exports.

**JOURNALIST:**

Prime Minister can I ask on Afghanistan?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Can I just, have we got any questions about the expansion here first? Then we're happy to move to other topics.

**JOURNALIST:**

Do you think companies like Visy and other big corporations help stimulate the economy and do you think the companies should be making more investments like this rather than paying big dividends to shareholders?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Well businesses have got to manage their own affairs, but I think the track record of Visy is one of constant investment. As Anthony says, he is committed now to investing another \$2 billion over the next 10 years, create 5,000 jobs, he is investing \$100 million in the here and now.

These are high, well-paid manufacturing jobs in a very, very advanced plant. No plant more advanced in the world and that's right here in Tumut. I think it is a great credit to you and a great credit to the men and women that work here, that are part of the Visy team.

**JOURNALIST:**

Would you like to see more companies who are suffering high energy costs and high power bills invest in their own power generation as we see here with Visy?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Visy has the opportunity to do so because it obviously has the option of using biomass, using the lignin. Is that the right term?

**ANTHONY PRATT:**

Lignin, yeah.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Lignin which is the by-product of the paper-making process. They have got the opportunity to do that. Different companies have different opportunities.

But plainly, energy production, co-generation, heat recovery, every business is becoming more focused on saving energy and being more efficient in their use of energy. Of course, we have many programs and incentives for businesses to do that. Just like in the water business, you have got to make every drop count, in the energy business, you've got to make every gigajoule count or every electron count, talking about electricity.

**JOURNALIST:**

There's no federal government funding in this announcement today, so what are you doing here? Is this to assure voters you are not distracted given all the citizenship?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Yeah, thanks for the editorial. Any other questions?

**JOURNALIST:**

On Afghanistan, now that President Trump has signaled that we are moving from nation-building to terrorist-killing. Do you think that Australia's role in the conflict will move from one of training and advisory to more of a direct combat role and how do you see that panning out?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Well look, we already are one of the most substantial contributors to the effort, to the Coalition effort in Afghanistan. In fact, we have the largest non-NATO contribution in Afghanistan. So obviously we work very closely with the US, as you know.

I was with Jim Mattis, Defense Secretary Mattis in Kabul recently and of course I met with him again in Australia and in Singapore as has my Defence Minister Marise Payne. So any further requests that the Americans have we'll obviously look at that and consult with them but we have already increased our forces there.

So I'm not ruling anything out, but clearly we work very closely with them. It is a very, very close and intimate alliance. So we'll work through it but I think what the President is doing, is showing a resolve to ensure that the terrorists in Afghanistan are not able to regroup and once again, as he said in his speech, once again threaten us from Afghanistan as they did in the past.

**JOURNALIST:**

This does put more boots on the ground, do you have any apprehensions about the indefinite timeline?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Well I'm not going to speculate on what additional resources we would bring to bear would be. But as to the timeline, I think the western, the Coalition commitment to Afghanistan you should expect it would be very long-term, as it has been.

**JOURNALIST:**

Prime Minister does the ADF have capacity to increase its commitment to the war?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Again, that's a very open-ended question. Of course it depends how much and for how long and what other calls on the ADF's resources are present. But again, we will work through, rather than speculate.

The President has not set out precisely what additional US resources will be deployed. So we'll be having close consultation with the US and when, then the outcome of those consultations may result in additional resources being deployed to Afghanistan, but I don't want to speculate on it. We are very, very staunch allies, very staunch allies in the global war to defeat terrorism full stop.

**JOURNALIST:**

Are you prepared to stay joined at the hip with the US if it's winning at all costs from their perspective, as many troops as it needs for as long as it needs?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

The Alliance is very, very strong, none stronger.

**JOURNALIST:**

But given the 'joined at the hip' argument, comment, does that mean you'd instinctively favour any request from the US?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

It means, I'll repeat what I said. The US alliance is the bedrock of our national security, we are staunch allies, strong allies. None stauncher or stronger. Okay?

**JOURNALIST:**

What guarantees have you sort from your other MP's and Senators that they are not dual citizens and that we've seen the end of this whole saga?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Well, I'll make a disclosure about citizenship for my own part. My father was born in Tumut, so right here, right here in this town. So I suppose I have Tumut citizenship by ancestry. So I'm very proud of that.

Look, just in terms of the citizenship exercise, the issue of citizenship by descent, which is the especially controversial one that has, you know, come as a surprise to many people, not in least those people who have discovered they were dual citizens, that will be dealt with by the High Court in the near future. I know there's a directions hearing tomorrow and the court will no doubt decide on dates for hearings and it will be dealt with then.

**JOURNALIST:**

Do you think Barnaby Joyce should step aside given the recent announcements?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

No.

**JOURNALIST:**

Are you confident there's no other cases though, that's my question really. Are you confident that that's it? Have we seen the end of it or?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Well the court will have in terms of the citizenship by descent question, by the time it sits on this case, it will have quite a few. It will have Senators Canavan, Nash, Xenophon and Barnaby Joyce, so that's four. So that citizenship by descent issue I think has got four 'test cases' if you like, and they will and the court will resolve that issue then.

**JOURNALIST:**

Has a decision been made not to refer any Labor MP's to the High Court and if they don't give up the paperwork as you've asked, will that be something you consider?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Look, I'm not going to speculate any further on this. As you can see what a number of our members have done is when these issues arose, they've declared them to the Parliament and referred themselves to the High Court.

I want to say and repeat my response to your question, that I am very, very confident that the court will find that those members that have been caught up in this dual citizenship issue by reason of descent, will be found not to be disqualified. So I'm very confident, consistent with the Solicitor-General's advice that Barnaby Joyce for example will be found not to be disqualified from sitting in the House of Representatives.

He is qualified to sit in the House of Representatives and he's a Member of the House of Representatives and therefore he's entitled to be a Minister.

**JOURNALIST:**

Are you having a look into George Christensen's case? I understand he is born to a Scottish mother and Scottish citizenship laws changed in 2010, is that something you're investigating?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Look again, I'm not going to speculate on individual matters like that. This issue of citizenship by descent is one that the court will resolve the near future. As I said, I'm confident that in cases where a person is born in Australia, is a citizen by reason of being born in Australia, but has by virtue of the law of another country, citizenship by reason of some ancestral relationship, that will not be found to disqualify them from sitting in Parliament, unless of course they've acknowledged that foreign citizenship in some way. You know, like taking out a foreign passport or something of that kind. So I think you all understand the advice that we have, the substance of it. We're confident in that advice and we look forward to the court resolving

or dealing with the matter and clarifying it as soon as possible.

**JOURNALIST:**

Out here in the regions we are nervous about our job security, what is the government doing to push through its media reforms given Senators like Nick Xenophon have backed up.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Yeah, as you know, we are doing everything we can to get those media reforms through the Parliament. But the big obstacle – and you mention Nick Xenophon and we're clearly continuing to negotiate with Nick – but really the big obstacle is the Labor Party.

If Bill Shorten valued your job, if he cared about your job, he'd be supporting the media law reforms. If he cared about the media, jobs in the media in regional Australia, he'd be supporting it. Now if he supported it, it would sail through the Senate.

So I'm not diminishing the importance of the crossbench but the only reason that we're engaged in this negotiation, is because Bill Shorten is not backing media jobs in regional Australia. You know that your future depends on media reforms. We're backing you, we're backing your job and those of your work colleagues.

The Labor Party for purely political reasons – as is always the case – is not. So we'll continue protecting your job, doing everything we can and we will do our best to get it through the Senate. Now just one more.

**JOURNALIST:**

How great is it to have some of the big businesses like Visy supporting regional areas like Tumut?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

It is fantastic, come here Anthony, we've got off the political stuff. Look it is great and you know this is where the vast majority of Australians – 80 plus per cent, 87 per cent I think of Australians work in the private sector. They work in small businesses, they work in big businesses. The big businesses contract with small businesses. Some of the consultants we saw up there in the control room, good examples of that.

So what Anthony's doing is showing a real commitment to investment in regional Australia and that means jobs. I cannot repeat this too often; we are supporting investment, we're encouraging investment because we know that means more jobs. The only way you get more jobs and better-paid jobs, is if you get more investment.

Now everything we do is promoting investment. When Bill Shorten – and I'll conclude on this – when Bill Shorten was asked on the ABC what was his policy to create more jobs, all he could say was that he believed we should invest

in public transport. Well, I'm sure public transport is a very good thing. I catch lots of buses and trains and trams myself, but ultimately it's not going to create a big incentive for investment in plants and businesses all around the country including in regional Australia. So higher taxes, more regulation, going after small and family businesses like Labor is doing, that is going to slow investment, deter investment and discourage employment.

So jobs and growth, is not just a slogan it's an outcome. 240,000 new jobs in the last year and with commitments and leadership like you have from Anthony Pratt, you'll see many more in the years to come. But you need a government that's committed to investment and supporting business to make that investment because that's where the jobs come from.

Thank you all very much.

**[ENDS]**